

The BUILDER



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Mayor Williams and DHCD Set to Announce Housing Legislative Agenda

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is taking an aggressive posture toward changing the housing situation in Washington.

Mayor Anthony Williams will introduce a comprehensive housing legislative package to the Council of the District of Columbia in spring 2001. The Mayor will submit an omnibus bill encompassing eight titles created to protect affordable housing and prevent displacement, convert vacant and dilapidated buildings; and promote new affordable housing opportunities. DHCD and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development drafted this legislative package as well as four accompanying regulatory proposals.

“The draft legislation is designed to resolve some of the issues that have emerged from the city’s tight housing market,” says Milton Bailey, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development. “We’ve examined some of the dire housing problems and created bills that will give residents and developers relief from the obstacles they are currently facing in the city.”

DHCD enlisted the help of more than 35 public and private organizations to draft legislation, including the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, Latino Economic Development Corporation, Fannie Mae Foundation, D.C. Housing Finance Agency and the National Housing Conference.

By receiving input from the city’s major housing partners, the agency was able to create a dynamic set of bills that will address the emerging housing issues and complement those laws already in place to protect very low-income residents.

“The Department did an effective job in seeking input on the proposed legislation from members of the community who are involved in housing construction and affected by the changes in Washington’s housing market,” says George Rothman of Manna, Inc. “This process worked, and I encourage the Department to continue getting feedback from the community in its upcoming initiatives.”

The legislative package includes bills that directly benefit residents, developers and the city government.

If the legislation is approved, low-income homeowners facing steep property value increases will have a portion of their increased property taxes deferred; homeowners living in select historic neighborhoods will receive a tax credit for renovating their houses to meet historic rehabilitation standards; and landlords opting out of the Section 8 project-based assistance program will give DHCD nine months’ notice of their intention so that DHCD can work with tenants to preserve affordable housing opportunities.

The legislation gives developers who opt to build affordable housing a variety of incentives.

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Panama Ambassador Visits DHCD

The Department recognizes the important role it has in increasing housing and commercial development opportunities in Washington, and it has embarked on a comprehensive effort to help government officials throughout the world spur economic efforts in their countries.

Over the last year, DHCD has hosted three Chinese delegations, finalized plans to meet with a government housing official from Japan in May 2001, and recently welcomed Dr. Osmond Nicholas, Ambassador to the Republic of Panama.

Dr. Nicholas has successfully established international trade zones between his homeland and other countries in the past. He is working in collaboration with the Las Americas Avenue Development Corporation (LAADC) to have an International Enterprise Zone established between Washington and the Republic of Panama. If legal and legislative approval is received, the trade zone could help facilitate the easy exchange of products from businesses in both



Milton Bailey greets Dr. Osmond Nicholas.

areas and strengthen the economic impact of local businesses.

LAADC has submitted an unsolicited proposal to the Department to help foster the establishment of the International Enterprise Zone. The Department is currently reviewing the unsolicited proposal and working with LAADC to usher it through the underwriting process.

DHCD and HFA Support Multimillion Dollar Housing Complex in Ward 8

DHCD and the D.C. Housing Finance Agency (HFA), in another one of their strategic partnerships, helped the Douglas Knoll Cooperative Limited Partnership acquire and rehabilitate 182 housing units in Ward 8. The organization will transform the dilapidated multifamily apartments located at 1900-2106 Savannah Terrace, SE and 3330-3341 22nd Street, SE into an affordable rental housing complex called Douglas Knoll Apartments.

DHCD provided \$985,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to the development project, and the HFA contributed a \$10 million tax-exempt bond, a \$675,000 taxable note, and an allocation of 4% low-income housing tax credits. The project's total cost is estimated at \$21.6 million.

"This project is another example of how we can strengthen the impact of our dollars by combining housing resources," says Milton J. Bailey, Director of

the Department of Housing and Community Development. "Our partnership helps both departments' development funds go further and allows us to bring more affordable housing options to residents."

In Fiscal Year 2000, DHCD invested about \$9.1 million to spur housing and economic development opportunities in Ward 8. Federal funds were used for numerous projects including the development of the Oxen Creek Townhouses, Washington View Condominiums, and St. Paul Senior Living at Wayne Place.

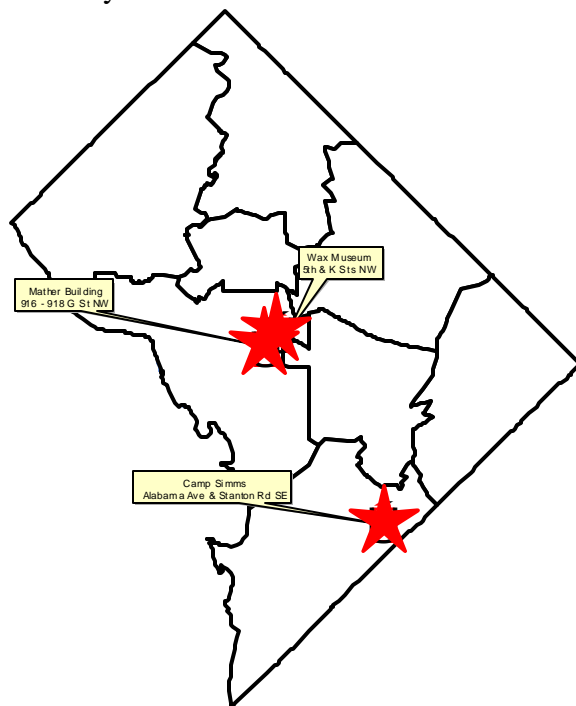
**To learn more about DHCD,
log onto the Department's
web site at
www.dhcd.dcgov.org.**

RFPs Released for Key District-Owned Properties

The District government owns several properties throughout the city, and DHCD has renewed its efforts to use the city's assets as a catalyst for economic development. In the past few months, the Department has taken steps to redevelop three government-owned sites that have the potential to jump start revitalization in local communities.

In February, Mayor Anthony Williams, DHCD and the D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency announced the approval of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop the Old Wax Museum Site, located at the corner of 5th and K Streets, NW. The RFP calls for a mixed-use development with at least 400 housing units, retail space, and an area designated for arts and cultural uses. The site has a critical role in developing the North of Massachusetts Avenue (NoMA) area and bridging the gap between downtown and the Shaw community.

"The release of the Old Wax Museum RFP will put us another step closer to creating Washington's 'living' downtown area, with first-class places to live, work, shop and play," says Milton Bailey, Director of Department of Housing and Community Development. "We plan to work hard and provide investment capital to ensure downtown sets the economic standards for cities across the country."



The Mather Building is located at 916-918 G Street, NW.

The Old Wax Museum Site RFP was sent to the Council of the District of Columbia for approval in February 2001, and it could be released as early as April 2001.

An RFP for the redevelopment of the Mather Building was released in February 2001. The 10-story building is located at 916-918 G Street, NW in downtown Washington. It has been identified as an important link between the redevelopment efforts at the Woodward and Lothrop building and the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metro Station. The RFP called for the building's first floor to be used for the arts and the remaining floors for housing. Proposals for the Mather Building are due by April 13, 2001.

In December, DHCD issued a RFP for the development of the Camp Simms Site in Ward 8. The 25-acre site is one of the largest development opportunities left in Washington. The RFP called for a mixed-use development with single family housing and a neighborhood shopping center anchored by a national grocer. Proposals were due by March 12, 2001.

DHCD will play an integral role in selecting the developers for the government-owned sites and will work diligently to ensure each brings quality housing and retail services to local residents.

Housing Legislative Agenda

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Bills are being introduced to abate a percentage of the real estate taxes paid by developers who include affordable housing units in their projects and allows others who commit to building affordable housing a chance to apply for funding from DHCD's Housing Production Trust Fund, which received a \$25 million boost from the sale of the Department of Employment Services building to the Freedom Forum.

For the city government, the legislative package includes bills to help the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs quickly repair or demolish deteriorating and vacant properties; assist DHCD in purchasing and selling abandoned properties; and reengineer the Homestead Housing Preservation Program to allow the Department to sell properties to developers who will turn them into rental housing.

The Department must receive legal clearance from the Office of Corporation Council and fiscal impact statements for each bill from the Office of Tax and Revenue before formally introducing the legislation to the city council. DHCD expects to receive the necessary approvals in March 2001.

Examples of DHCD's Proposed Housing Legislation

Due Process - This bill will provide the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) the authority to quickly repair or demolish deteriorated and vacant properties.

Modifications to Quick Take - This bill provides the District government, acting through the Department of Housing and Community Development, with the authority to acquire and dispose of abandoned and deteriorated properties.

Notification of Expiring Use - This bill requires owners of federally subsidized housing to notify the District and their tenants nine months prior to opting out of the program. Owners opting out of an existing one-year extension must notify the District and tenants five months prior to expiration.

(All bills must receive legal and financial approval before being submitted to the city council.)

Dedication Ceremony Scheduled for DHCD-Funded Project

On March 31, 2001, a dedication ceremony will be held to celebrate the restoration, renovation and expansion of 901 - 913 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, which is the home of the Phyllis Wheatley Young Women's Christian Association, Inc. The organization combined three existing buildings into one single building that will house its offices and 117 Single Room Occupancy units. The properties were built in 1907 and are designated as historic landmarks.

DHCD provided about \$900,000 in HOME funds to help offset the costs of the rehabilitation. The project's total cost was \$4.6 million, for a leveraging factor of about five private dollars to every one public dollar spent.



The Phyllis Wheatley YWCA is located at 901-913 Rhode Island Avenue, NW.

Residents Testify at Public Hearing

In late February, DHCD held a public hearing on the draft “Consolidated Plan for the District of Columbia Fiscal Year 2002 Action Plan.” The hearing gave residents a chance to comment on how the Department plans to spend its funds during the next fiscal year for four federal entitlement programs: Community Development Block Grant Program, HOME Investment Partnerships Program, Emergency Shelter Grants Program, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program.

During the hearing, over 20 residents came to testify about housing and community development needs that affect them and their organizations. Comments echoed those given by residents at DHCD’s public hearing held in October 2000, which were to increase financial assistance for homebuyers; assist in the development of affordable rental and for sale housing; support residents being displaced from uninhabitable rental buildings; and encourage commercial development opportunities in under-served neighborhoods.

The draft plan outlined the budgets to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the federal programs and was written to reflect the Department’s plans to



Thurman Walker and Mike Dinkin testify at the public hearing.

strategically target housing and economic development opportunities in key areas throughout the city, such as commercial corridors and emerging growth communities. The document was available for review at DHCD’s office building, all public library branches, all Advisory Neighborhood Commission offices, and four community based organizations.

DHCD will use the public’s input from the hearing and written statements to finalize the plan for submission to the Council of the District of Columbia and HUD. Residents who wish to receive a copy of the finalized document can call Tia Matthews, Public Information Officer, at (202) 442-7259.

DHCD Celebrates Heritage Week

DHCD staff often celebrates national holidays in special ways, and Black History Month was no exception. In February, the agency started a new tradition by announcing plans for Heritage Week. During the celebration, staff members volunteered to display historic documents, family heirlooms and other precious memorabilia in their workstations. The festivities concluded with participating employees exhibiting their items in the Department’s boardroom. Several notable collections were shared, including Jan Bailey’s impressive African artwork, Edwina Miles’ family photographs, and Andrena Crockett’s unique African-American antiques.



Above: Mozella Boyd-Johnson’s Afrocentric doll.
Inset: Jan Bailey’s statue of Louie Armstrong.

DHCD Improves Customer Service Rating

Mayor Anthony Williams and DHCD are committed to providing residents with the best customer service. Recently, the Department's customer service rating improved. We want to congratulate the many dedicated, courteous and hard working staff members who helped DHCD reach this goal.

Customer Service Stars



Marthine Bartee
Mary Blair
Vernell Buford
Lyn Coon
Judy Davis
Rene Gonzales

Emma Hazell
Taylor Holcomb
Debra Lewis-Stottland
LaShawn McLeod
Ruby Rigby
Diane White-Bey



Department of Housing and Community Development
801 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002